

Hampton Burial Vault

HABS No. MD-226-W

535 Hampton Lane

Ridgely family burial ground, North and adjacent to  
U. S. Interstate 695, East and adjacent to Hampton  
National Historic Site

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Baltimore County

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WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

HABS No. MD-226-W

HAMPTON BURIAL VAULT

Location: 535 Hampton Lane, Ridgely family burial ground, east and adjacent to Hampton National Historic Site, north and adjacent to U.S. Interstate 695, Towson, Baltimore County, Maryland

Present Owner: John Ridgely, III

Present Use: Interments

Statement of Significance: The vault, which dominates the walled Ridgely family cemetery, is an excellent example of a small scaled, classical revival mausoleum.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Original and subsequent owners: The tract of land on which the Burial Vault was built was acquired in 1745 by Colonel Charles Ridgely from Clement and Ann Hill. The 1500 acre tract, "Northampton," had been inherited by Ann Hill from her father, Henry Darnall, who had patented it in 1695. Captain Charles Ridgely, Colonel Ridgely's son, inherited the property in 1772 after his father's death. Captain Ridgely, for whom Hampton Mansion was built, died in 1790. In accordance with his will, nephew Charles Carnan assumed title to much of the estate and the Ridgely name. On January 17, 1791, widow Rebecca Ridgely signed an agreement with Charles Carnan Ridgely to exchange a tract of land and a house for her rights, claims and interest to Hampton. The estate was inherited by Charles Carnan Ridgely's second son, John, in 1829, as his first son, Charles, had died in 1819. After John's death in 1867, the estate was inherited by his son, Charles, who bequeathed it to his son, John, in 1872. The estate was left to John Ridgely, Jr. in 1938, who sold the mansion to the Avalon Foundation in 1946. After John Ridgely, Jr.'s death in 1959, John Ridgely, III, inherited the title to the burial ground tract of land which comprises the walled enclosure and access from Hampton Lane.

2. **Date of erection:** Traditionally the building date is noted as 1830, as is suggested by the architectural style.
3. **Architect:** Unknown
4. **Construction information:** None known
5. **Alterations and additions:** None known
6. **Important old views:** Joshua Barney's 1843 map of Hampton indicates the "Vault" within the "Graveyard."

- B. **Historic Events and Persons Connected with the Structure:**  
See the historical data for Hampton Mansion (HABS No. MD-226-A).

It is not known at the time of this recording who is interred in the vault which stood open for many years. When the interior was vandalized several years ago, the vault was closed without a record having been made of the interments in the interior crypts.

- C. **Sources of Information:**

1. **Primary and unpublished sources:** The Ridgely family papers are indexed by Avril J. M. Pedley in The Manuscript Collections of the Maryland Historical Society, Baltimore, 1968. Contained are eight collection numbers which list eighty-seven volumes and approximately thirty-five boxes of loose material.
2. **Secondary and published sources:** None known

## PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

- A. **General Statement:**

1. **Architectural character:** This small, one-story mausoleum, constructed of marble masonry at the main elevations, has a three-bay, classical revival facade which forms a parapet screening the W-shaped roof exposed at the rear brick masonry elevation.
2. **Condition of the fabric:** The structure is in fair condition. The roof valleys are overgrown with vegetation and the close proximity to the Baltimore Beltway is

hastening the deterioration of the marble, which is badly pitted from air pollution. The interior was vandalized several years ago when several drawers from the crypts were removed. Two closure slabs from the crypts lie face down in front of the vault.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Overall dimensions: The burial vault measures 22'-8" x 21-11".
2. Foundations: The foundations are inaccessible, though they are probably brick.
3. Wall construction, finish and color: The east, north and west elevations are constructed of predominantly gray veined marble, while the south wall is constructed of red brick, laid in common bond. The facade, or north elevation, has two slightly projecting end pavilions flanking the central entrance bay. Each pavilion has plain pilasters at the corners and are set on a continuous plinth course. The pavilion panels, formed by the pilasters, are plain. However, the walling of the central bay has eight courses of simple rustication below the facade entablature. The east and west walls have eight random width, flush courses of stone which are bonded into the south wall's brick masonry. A plain stone coping completes the side walls at the crown moulding height of the facade entablature and the walling is set on slightly projecting water tables, the height of the facade plinth course. There are no inscriptions.
4. Structural system: The masonry bearing walls and crypts appear to support the roof structure.
5. Porches: There are no porches, though an approximately 3'-6" wide walkway, which is nearly obscured by grass and weed growth, is paved with brick laid in a herring-bone pattern and extends around the Burial Vault.
6. Chimneys: None
7. Openings:
  - a. Doorways and doors: The central entrance, 5'-8" high and 3'-0" wide, has projecting jamb pilasters which extend to grade and receive the plinth course of the

facade. The jamb pilasters support a projecting lintel member which has end blocks, each with a low pyramidal relief inset. A marble slab fills the opening and is set near the top with two round bronze knobs below two round, bronze escutcheon-like appendices which allow the slab to be let down and used as a walkway into the vault.

A wrought iron gate, now removed from the site for protection from further vandalism, originally hung at the entrance way on two wrought iron pintles which are driven into the face of the west jamb pilaster. The offset hinges, which are still intact, have double spherical finials. The pintles have similar drops. The gate, 3'-0" x 5'-4", has a solid panel in the lower half. Forming the lock rail is a series of circle motifs with C-scroll insets. Remnants of a lock exist on the gate. Above the lock rail, wrought iron straps form an open, classical revival palmette by using volutes extending from a twisted iron center "stem" and joined by iron beads to the inside of an inverted heart. Each pendentive has an additional voluted iron strap.

b. Windows: None

8. Roof:

a. Shape and covering: The W-shaped roof, the main ridge of which has collapsed near the front facade, is slate shingled. The two valleys which slope toward the rear (south) elevation have projecting marble blocks with semicircular gutter recesses. There is no verge treatment as the slate shingles are cut flush with the brick walling which extends into the gable and half gables.

b. Cornice and eaves: The front facade has a full entablature with side returns, which is characterized by having, directly above the facade pilasters, a projecting fillet which forms a capital motif, or an abacus, that receives the frieze space with a quirked, cyma reversa bedmoulding. A fascia with a drip edge at the projecting soffit extends into a cavetto below the fillet of the large echinus crown moulding. Above the entablature a low parapet projects over each pavilion and over each pilaster are square section, stylized

acroteria which are non-classical and probably based on the lotus motif. A plain raked blocking completes the parapet between the pavilion crestings.

C. Description of Interior: The vault's interior with its crypts, was inaccessible at the time of recording.

D. Site and Surroundings:

1. General setting: The Burial Vault, facing north, is located near the south wall of the Ridgely family cemetery on axis with the entrance gates which are set centrally in the north wall.
2. Landscape: The cemetery plot, approximately 120'-0" x 80'-0", is enclosed by an approximately 7'-6" high brick wall built on a stone foundation. A cast iron channel forms the cap of the wall. The entrance piers to the cemetery are hung with a pair of wrought iron gates together which have an ogee arched rail above the horizontal top rail. Round section pickets extend from the bottom rail through a semicircular member, which forms a diagonal, segmentally arched brace in each gate, through the lock and top rails and the ogee arch where each picket forms a ball and inverted cone finial. Below the top rail, the pickets are connected with C-scrolls having center drops. Between the lock and bottom rails the main pickets are infilled with intermediate pickets which have similar finial caps above the lock rail. A large wrought iron bolt on a pivot secures the gates and a strap of iron forms a stop at the meeting rails. The detailing of the gates is similar to the work of Gustav Krug of Baltimore.
3. Outbuildings: There are no outbuildings in the immediate vicinity. However, there are several grave markers and headstones nearby, particularly around the perimeter of the plot. The simple stones and a minimal amount of sculpture of various ages mark the graves of several family members and family friends. The cemetery is generally overgrown with weeds and grass and has been subjected to repeated vandalism.

### PART III. PROJECT INFORMATION:

This project was initially financed with funds from the "Mission 66" Program of the National Park Service under the direction of Charles E. Peterson, Supervising Architect, Historic Structures. Hampton

Mansion was measured in 1958 by Student Assistant Architects Orville W. Carroll (University of Oregon), Harold A. Nelson (University of Michigan), and Trevor Nelson (M.I.T.), with Professor Lee H. Nelson (University of Illinois) as Project Supervisor. The complex was measured and drawn in 1959 by Student Assistant Architects Charles C. Boldrick (University of Notre Dame), Richard C. Mehring (University of Virginia) and Herbert L. Banks (University of Florida), with Professor F. Blair Reeves (University of Florida) as Project Supervisor.

The project was edited in 1972-73 by Rodd L. Wheaton, Architect, Historic American Buildings Survey, who prepared the historical data, edited and expanded the 1959 architectural data, and recorded several structures which were previously unrecorded.